

ACADEMIC DEFINITIONS

Academic Program Definitions

Degree program: A degree program is an area of study approved as such by the university and listed on the official inventory of degree programs (e.g., English, social work, pharmacy, accounting). The degree, which is a credential signifying a rank or level of educational attainment and which is conferred on students who have successfully completed a degree program, is represented by the official degree designation (e.g., B.A.—Bachelor of Arts, B.S.—Bachelor of Science, etc.)

Associates degrees are a minimum of 60 credits. Bachelor's degrees are a minimum of 120 credits. Master's degrees are a minimum of 30 credits beyond the bachelor's. There is no specified minimum for doctoral programs other than those required by accrediting agencies.

Major: An undergraduate major is a field of study within an approved undergraduate degree program, having its own curriculum. A degree program may have more than one major. A major must have a minimum of 30 credits. A major must have at least 21 credits that do not overlap with the undergraduate core curriculum, or with another major, including the student's concentration.

Minor: A minor is an area of study outside of the major that permits students to pursue a secondary academic discipline. A minor must include at least 18 credits. Minors are only available to students earning a baccalaureate degree. A minor must have at least 12 credits that do not overlap with the core curriculum, with a major including the student's concentration, or with another minor. Exceptions to this minimum of 12 unique credits for a minor can be made for students in majors that require at least 48 credits who are also seeking a minor. In such circumstances, students can earn a minor with a minimum of 8 unique credits.

Certificate: Concordia offers two types of certificates. A credit-bearing certificate program is a coherent, specialized curriculum designed for students seeking a specific body of knowledge for personal/career development or professional continuing education. Certificates may be earned by students already enrolled at the university, or may be stand-alone programs where students enroll specifically to earn the certificate.

Credit-bearing certificates may be offered at undergraduate or graduate levels and are a minimum of 12 academic credits. There are no unique credit requirements for a certificate. A certificate is a subset of an existing degree program if 50 percent or more of its courses were derived from that program.

The university also offers non-credit, continuing education certificates which consist of continuing education credits (CEUs).

Concordia also offers graduate professional development (GPD) credits for students seeking professional development experiences (in Graduate Education only); these are not interchangeable with regular academic credits. GPD credits do not lead to an academic credential from Concordia University.

Concentration (AKA "area of emphasis" or "track"): A concentration is a specific subject area of focus within an approved degree program, such as an undergraduate major or a graduate program. A program concentration involves fewer than 50% of the total hours in the program of which it is a part, with the remaining hours taken in common by all students in the program.

Undergraduate major concentrations must be at least 12 credits; at least 9 credits must be unique to that concentration, and cannot overlap with another concentration. None of the credits in a concentration may overlap with the undergraduate core curriculum.

Graduate program concentrations must be at least 9 credits; at least 6 credits must be unique to that concentration, and cannot overlap with another concentration. None of the credits in a concentration may overlap with any graduate core curriculum that may apply.

Pathway: A Pathway is defined as a University-wide emphasis consisting of select sections of existing courses. Students must complete a minimum of 15 credits in course sections assigned to a specific Pathway. Fulfillment of Pathway requirements culminates in a transcript designation. In some cases, completion of a pathway may result in a digital or paper credential upon degree completion.